

Bois D'Arc Conservation Area Idea Gathering Stage Public Input Summary



Bois D'Arc Conservation Area

Missouri Department of Conservation
April 2017



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The Missouri Department of Conservation (the Department) is seeking public input as we develop and revise conservation area management plans.
- Bois D'Arc Conservation Area (CA) is a 3,172-acre area in Greene County located 1 mile north of the town of Bois D'Arc. It is one of nearly 1,000 conservation areas owned or managed by the Department. Conservation areas support the Department's mission by offering places to restore and conserve fish, forest and wildlife resources, and providing opportunities for all citizens to use, enjoy, and learn about these resources. Conservation areas are different from state or local parks that may place a greater emphasis on team sports, recreational activities, or social gatherings.
- The Department conducted a public involvement idea gathering phase (Jan. 1-31, 2017) to gather input as staff begins to develop a 15-year management plan for Bois D'Arc CA.
- During this time period, we received 36 comments from 34 respondents.
- Common themes heard during this idea gathering stage include concern with invasive species, support for upland bird and rabbit management, suggestions to allow horseback riding and add a long-range rifle range, and appreciation for this area.
- The Bois D'Arc CA planning team will take comments into consideration as they draft a 15-year area management plan. The draft plan will be available online (likely fall 2017) for a month-long comment period at mdc.mo.gov/areaplans.

INTRODUCTION

Public Comment on Conservation Area Management Plans

The Department wants to know what Missourians think about its nearly 1,000 conservation areas around the state. The Department is in a multi-year process of updating management plans for conservation areas and invites public comments. To preview draft management plans and share comments online, visit mdc.mo.gov/areaplans.

Department conservation areas cover almost 1 million public acres for the purpose of restoring and conserving forest, fish and wildlife resources, and for providing opportunities for all citizens to use, enjoy, and learn about these resources. Most Missourians are within a 30-minute drive of a Department conservation area.

Missourians care about conservation and use conservation areas for many different reasons. These areas help people discover nature through various activities, and help make Missouri a great place to hunt, fish, and enjoy other outdoor activities. We want to know how conservation areas are important to Missourians. Encouraging public comments on Conservation Area Management Plans is part of the Department's ongoing efforts of working for and with Missourians to sustain healthy forests, fish, and wildlife.

Conservation Area Management Plans focus on natural resource management and public use on conservation areas. The plans do not address regulations on hunting, fishing, and other area uses, which are set by the Conservation Commission and enforced under the *Wildlife Code of Missouri*. The Department will consider all ideas received and will work to balance the issues and interests identified with the responsibility of managing areas for the present and future benefits to forest, fish, wildlife, and people. Decisions on which ideas to incorporate into area plans and on how to best incorporate them will be based on the property's purpose, its physical and biological conditions and capabilities, the best roles of the property in its local, regional, and statewide context, and on the professional expertise of Department staff.

Questions? Please contact Missouri Department of Conservation Public Involvement Coordinator Amy Buechler at 573-522-4115 x3252, or amy.buechler@mdc.mo.gov.

Bois D'Arc Conservation Area

Bois D'Arc CA was named after the trees that dominate the mostly open landscape of the region. The Osage Indians used the sturdy limbs of these trees to make their bows (named Bois D'Arc or "arc of wood"). Other local names for these trees are hedge apple, Bois D'Arc tree, bowwood, Osage orange, and hedge. Some of the trees on this area are more than 100 years old.

Bois D'Arc CA is managed primarily for bobwhite quail, doves, and cottontail rabbits. Local farmers share-crop the area under contracts that also benefit the local economy. The contour strip-cropping practices reduce soil erosion and provide the habitat diversity that is attractive to wildlife species, such as quail, rabbit, northern harrier, dove, and many songbirds.

Several small fishless ponds serve as breeding areas for aquatic turtles and salamanders. Some lowland sites are attractive to woodcock and wetland wildlife species. A small deer herd and a few wild turkeys can be found on the area.

This conservation area was acquired in part through the Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The Andy Dalton Shooting Range and Outdoor Education Center is located on this conservation area.

The Department conducted a public involvement idea gathering phase (Jan. 1-31, 2017) to gather input as staff begins to develop a 15-year management plan for Bois D'Arc CA. The plan, once drafted, will be posted online (mdc.mo.gov/areaplans) for further public comment.

Public Involvement

The idea gathering phase for development of the Bois D'Arc Conservation Area Management Plan ran from Jan. 1-31, 2017. The objective of this phase was to inform stakeholders about the area planning process and ask them to share their ideas. To communicate about this comment period, staff:

- Posted an online comment form available at mdc.mo.gov/areaplans;
- Sent news release to local media outlets in early January and posted to Missouri Department of Conservation Facebook and Twitter accounts;
- Sent announcement to area plan email list (6,000+ recipients);
- Posted notices on bulletin boards in and around Bois D'Arc CA;
- Contacted neighboring landowners about comment opportunity;
- Announced the comment opportunity at public programs; and
- Provided flyers at the Springfield Conservation Nature Center and regional office.

Next Steps

The area planning team will take comments into consideration as they draft a 15-year management plan for Bois D'Arc CA. The draft area management plan will be available online (likely fall 2017) for a monthlong comment period at mdc.mo.gov/areaplans. After that comment period, the plan will be finalized, and the final plan posted online.

DEMOGRAPHIC SUMMARY OF RESPONDENTS

Who responded?

From Jan. 1-31, 2017, we received 36 comments from 34 respondents for the Bois D'Arc Conservation Area Idea Gathering Stage.

Table 1. Total number of respondents commenting during the idea gathering phase (Jan. 1-31, 2017) by respondent category*

Organization Type	Respondents
Individual Citizens (no affiliation listed)	33
Non-Governmental Organizations (Show-Me Missouri Backcountry Horsemen)	1
TOTAL	34

*Respondent categories were self-identified by commenter. Comments do not necessarily reflect the official views of these organizations.

How they responded

Table 2. Total number of each response type received

Response Type	Comments
Web Comment Form	30
Hard Copy Comment Form	6
TOTAL	36

Where respondents are from

Table 3. Total number of responses categorized by each respondent's location

State	Respondents	Percent
Missouri	32	94
Arkansas	1	3
California	1	3

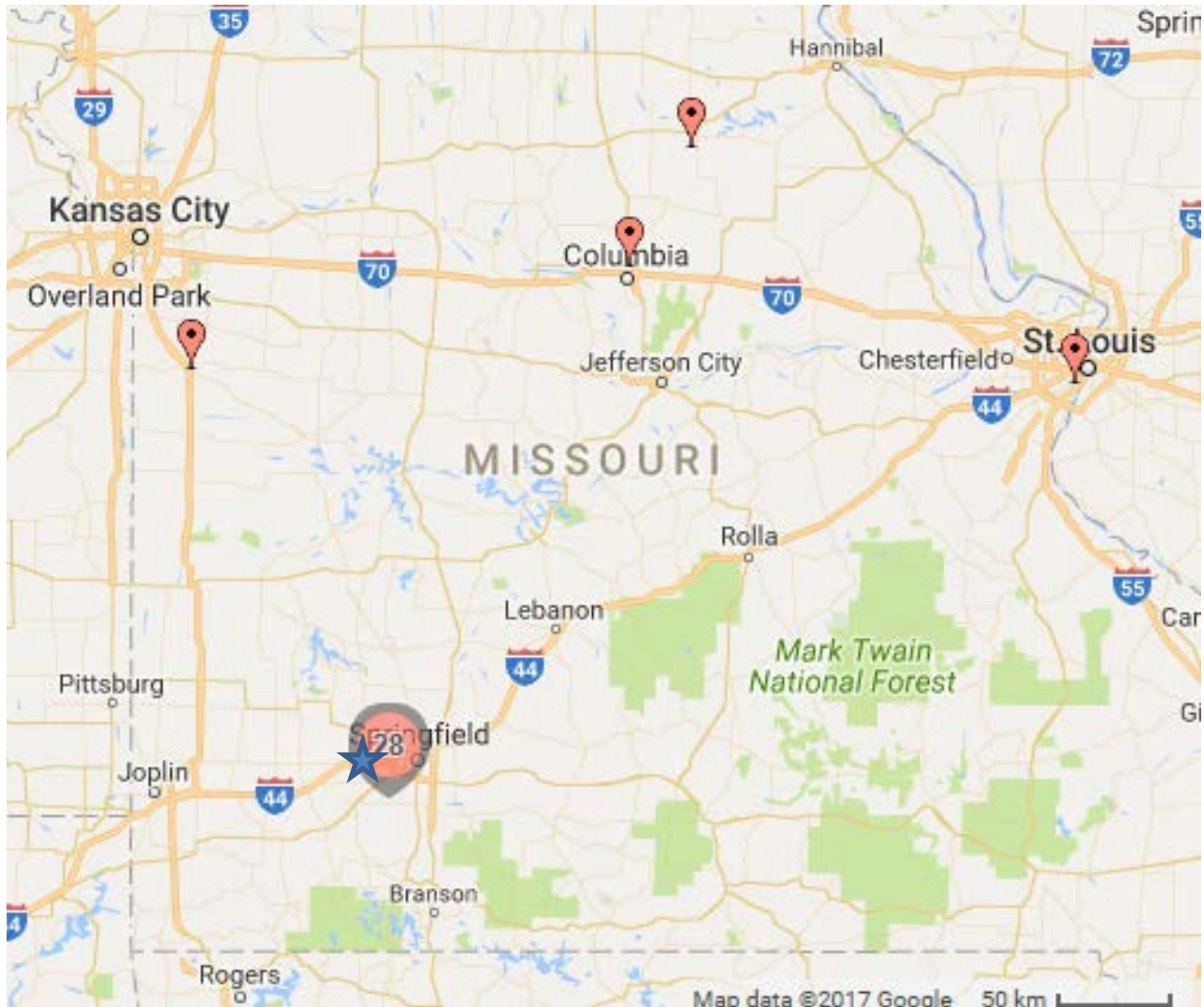
Figure 1. Map of All Respondent Locations by ZIP Code

★ = Bois D'Arc CA. The pinpoints below represent the central point of ZIP codes from which a public comment was received (they do not represent actual street addresses). Shaded circles with numbers show multiple responses from a geographic area. Mapped using <http://batchgeo.com/>.



Figure 2. Map of Missouri Respondents by ZIP Code

★ = Bois D'Arc CA. The pinpoints below represent the geographic center of ZIP code boundaries from which a public comment was received (they do not represent actual street addresses). Shaded circles with numbers in them represent multiple responses from a region. Mapped using <http://batchgeo.com/>.



THEMES AND ISSUES IDENTIFIED THROUGH BOIS D'ARC CONSERVATION AREA IDEA GATHERING PHASE (JANUARY 1-31, 2017)

The Bois D'Arc Conservation Area Idea Gathering Stage was available for a public idea gathering period Jan. 1-31, 2017. The Missouri Department of Conservation received 36 comments from 34 respondents. A brief summary of public input themes can be found below. The area planning team will take comments into consideration as they draft a 15-year management plan for Bois D'Arc CA. The draft area management plan will be available online (likely fall 2017) for a month-long comment period at mdc.mo.gov/areaplans. After that comment period, the plan will be finalized, and the final plan posted online.

Terrestrial Resource Management

- Suggests better control of invasive species, such as thistle and Johnson grass.
- Suggests more widespread use of prescribed fire.
- Opposes timber cutting.
- Suggests removing brush and trees with a dozer instead of a Kansas clipper.
- Suggests hinge cutting trees to provide rabbit cover.
- Suggests thinning vegetation to provide better habitat for small game such as rabbit, quail, dove, and other upland species. Suggests clearing brush so lands are more accessible for bow hunters.
- Suggests more intensive management of quail habitat.
- Suggests managing for milkweeds to support monarch butterflies.
- Suggests establishing a grazing system on parts of the area.
- Opposes cattle on Department lands.
- Neighbors would like to be informed when prescribed burns will occur.
- Would like to see more emphasis on glade management.
- Suggests adding lime to fields to adjust soil pH to 6.5 or 7.0.
- Suggests constructing thick loose brush piles (of wheatgrass, alfalfa, lespedeza, and clover) outside of rabbit dens to be used for nesting.
- Suggests placing mineral salt near breeding rabbit dens to increase rabbit reproduction.
- Suggests rotating dove field locations and rotating crops.

Public Use Management

Hunting

- Supports continued focus on the management of upland game birds (especially quail, dove, and pheasant) and rabbits.
- Suggests starting a state-managed program for raising and releasing quail to hunt.

- Suggests having managed hunts to make the area safer. Concerned about the safety of hunting on opening day of dove season (due to the number of hunters and observations of unsafe shotgun handling practices).
- Suggests closing the area after archery season to have a managed predator hunt with rifles. Suggests allowing coyote hunting.
- Suggests prohibiting lead shot.
- Suggests adding youth hunts to the area.
- Suggests emphasizing “no single projectile” firearms.
- Suggests controlling deer population.

Trails

- Suggests allowing horseback riding on area trails.
- Offers to partner with the Department in developing and maintaining horse riding trails.
- Suggests mowing trails more frequently.
- Suggests allowing cycling on area trails.
- Opposes allowing bicycles on trails.
- Supports limiting the area to foot traffic (with the exception of disability access) in order to protect the area’s karst terrain (sinkholes, caves, etc.).
- Suggests maintaining benches along trail.

Andy Dalton Shooting Range and Outdoor Education Center

- Would like a long-range rifle range (300-1,000 yards).
- Suggests adding another skeet field.
- The range crew is outstanding and very professional.
- Values the rifle and archery ranges.
- Would not support the expansion of ranges at the expense of hunting areas.
- Suggests organizing skeet shooting leagues.
- Suggests expanding hours to accommodate working public.

Area Maintenance

- Supports the removal of fences.
- Concern that trash is dumped behind the maintenance shed.
- Concern that gates are left open, allowing people to drive in unpermitted areas.
- Suggests bush-hogging weeds in the right of way.
- Appreciates areas along the road being mowed. Mowing these areas has improved visibility for drivers and has helped hunters be more aware of area boundaries.

Enforcement

- Suggests adding night surveillance in the parking lots.

Administrative Considerations

- A neighboring landowner would like to dispose of land and is looking for suggestions from the Department.
- A neighboring landowner requests assistance from the Department in maintaining the boundary fence.
- Boundary signs should be placed closer to homes. Neighboring landowner feels unsafe seeing people with guns walking near her property. Hunters have also shot close to the home.

Other

- Highly regards how the area is managed.
- Appreciates the variety of hunting and recreational opportunities provided at the area.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Bois D'Arc Conservation Area Idea Gathering Stage Flier



How are conservation areas important to you?

The Missouri Department of Conservation is updating management plans for our almost 1,000 conservation areas and we want your comments.

Bois D'Arc Conservation Area

The Missouri Department of Conservation is inviting public comment regarding Bois D'Arc Conservation Area in Greene County to aid staff in developing a 15-year management plan for the area. Interested persons or groups—including recreational users, neighboring landowners, conservation groups, elected officials and government agencies—are invited to offer input through a comment card or online at the website listed below.

Comment period closes

January 31, 2017



Take a look at management plans and share your comments online at mdc.mo.gov/areaplans, or get a copy of plans and comment forms at your local MDC office.

Appendix 2. Bois D'Arc Conservation Area Idea Gathering Stage Press Release

PUBLIC INPUT SOUGHT FOR BOIS D'ARC CONSERVATION AREA

Citizens can offer ideas for management of area through Jan. 31.

SPRINGFIELD, Mo. – The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) wants to know what Missourians think about its nearly 1,000 conservation areas around the state. Bois D'Arc Conservation Area in Greene County is among the areas currently under review.

MDC is inviting the public to provide comments about the Bois D'Arc Area to aid staff in developing a 15-year management plan for the popular public use area. Interested persons or groups – including recreational users, neighboring landowners, conservation groups, elected officials and government agencies – can share ideas online through Jan. 31 at mdc.mo.gov/areaplans

MDC staff will review comments as they develop a draft management plan for the Bois D'Arc Area. Decisions on which ideas to incorporate into area plans and on how best to incorporate them will be based on the property's purpose, its physical and biological conditions and capabilities, the best roles of the property in its local, regional and state-wide context, and on the professional expertise of MDC staff.

When the initial draft is complete, the Bois D'Arc Area Plan will be posted online for additional public comments and will be available for viewing at mdc.mo.gov/areaplans. After considering all public comments, the final plan will be drafted, approved and posted online.

The 3,172-acre Bois D'Arc Conservation Area is in western Greene County. The landscape is primarily grassland, old fields and croplands which are used for wildlife management; but the area also has intermittent forests and glades. The area includes the Andy Dalton Shooting Range and Outdoors Education Center.

The Bois D'Arc Area offers hunting opportunities and a variety of other recreational uses, including the five-mile Osage Orange Hiking Trail.



Through Jan. 31, citizens can offer ideas on how the Missouri Department of Conservation should manage the 3,172-acre Bois D'Arc Conservation Area in Greene County.

MEDIA CONTACT:

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Media Specialist

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Appendix 3. Bois D'Arc CA Idea Gathering Stage Hard Copy Comment Form



**How is Bois D'Arc Conservation Area
important to you?**

Personal Information

Name: _____

Organization (if any): _____

E-mail: _____

☐ Yes, I want to receive e-mail updates about the Bois D'Arc Area Plan.

☐ Yes, I want to receive e-mail updates about other conservation area plans.

Zip code: _____

Your ideas

The Missouri Department of Conservation is beginning to develop a new 15-year area management plan at Bois D'Arc Conservation Area. To help inform this effort, we welcome your ideas about the management of Bois D'Arc!



(Continued on back)

Appendix 4. Bois D'arc CA Idea Gathering Stage Facebook and Twitter Posts



[Missouri Dept. of Conservation](#) Facebook

• January 6 •

Citizens can offer ideas for management of area through Jan. 31. Learn more below. -- Joe@MDC



[Public input sought for Bois D'Arc Conservation Area | Missouri Department of Conservation](#)

Citizens can offer ideas for management of area through Jan. 31.

mdc.mo.gov

63 Likes 11 Comments 2 Shares

Comments

Clint Watson It's a little late to be asking for public input. You have been dozing timber and cover down for 2 years now. Just like most of the other mdc areas I hunt. I'm guessing you are planning to run cattle there too just like Schell Osage and Linscomb. I hate seeing what mdc is doing to these areas

[1](#) • January 8 at 10:26am • Edited

Jason Fuller I heard the rabbit hunting has gone downhill out there. It used to be a really good place to run dogs. I've heard from more than one person the habitat is being destroyed.

[2](#) • January 6 at 3:26pm

James Smith I think they should cut down a third of the trees then stack them in 30 foot tall piles, cut another third of the trees six feet up the trunk leaving fallen tree in place making sure they are perpendicular to the other fallen trees cut in this manner, plant corn on half the acreage, and then set everything on fire.

[2](#) · [January 6 at 6:44pm](#)

Tammy Rue Hardie There were great fishing ponds on the Richter property with a huge variety of fish. What has happened to those...not mentioned in the link?

[January 6 at 4:28pm](#)

James Smith MDC fish fry...

[January 6 at 6:46pm](#)

William Georges [Thomas Pavlich](#)- hey Uncle, remember this place? Lol

[1](#) · [January 6 at 9:50am](#)

Shawn Matney Good place, some dove managment would rock

[January 6 at 7:54pm](#)

Nathan Cruise i got a minor in possession there

[1](#) · [January 6 at 4:53pm](#)

Jordan Derby Lol

[1](#) · [January 7 at 6:40am](#)



Tweet



Public input sought through Jan. 31
for Bois D'Arc Conservation Area.

More at on.mo.gov/2hXXRH0



1/6/17, 9:59 AM



Reply to MO Conservation

Appendix 5. Comments Received During Bois D'Arc Conservation Area Idea Gathering Phase (Jan. 1-31, 2017)

Great area to continue developing for quail and dove hunting. Perhaps a state managed program where pen raised quail are released and a controlled hunt is offered for a minimal fee.
I don't have any particular ideas. I just wanted to offer some input. I grew up in Ash Grove and have spent a great deal of time hunting and hiking at Bois d arc. I have visited public land all around the state, as well as in Kansas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Iowa, and Kentucky. I have to say that this location is the best managed public land I've ever been on. It's incredibly diverse and offers an enormous variety of hunting and recreational opportunities. I am a quail hunter and have found so much success here. I would hate to ever see things change. I consider the conservation area to be my home and love every minute I get to attend there. Keep up the good work, I think things are perfect!
I would like this area to allow horseback trail riding and cycling.
I feel that Bois D'Arc should continue to be focused on quail and other upland game birds (Pheasant especially). My father and I have hunting here many times and it remains one of our favorite places to hunt.
Stop dozing down timber. Never use mdc land to run cattle. Tell the lazy bois d arc employees to lock gate behind them so people can't drive in areas they shouldn't. And fire whoever thinks they can dump their trash behind the maintenance shed. It's not a landfill.
Organized small game hunts Long range rifle ranges (300 - 1000 yds) organized skeet shooting leagues. Increased operating hours, to accommodate the worling public. Love the C.A - please keep up the great work.
Close the area down for a few weekends after archery season ends in January and do a special draw for predator control and allow a certain number of peopl to hunt predators with rifles.
Please continue to keep Quail and rabbits at the top of your management practices. Mow the trails more often and emphasize the "no single projectile" firearm limit more. Thank you and keep up the good work.
A great asset. The range crew are outstanding, very professional. another skeet field and perhaps a longer distance than 100 yards for the rifle range would be even better, but this is a first rate facility, very well run.
(Hardcopy comment received 1/30/2017): Control thistle and sprouts. Remove brush and trees with a dozer instead of Kansas clipper. I would like to see horse riders be able to ride their horses on conservation property. Take old fences (wire and posts) out of fence rows on perimeters and bush hog weeds in row. Control the deer population.
A rabbit will live in a 5 acre area 95% of their lives. Make a thick brushes area for a den with wheat grass - alfalfa - lespedeza- clover in a lose brushes surrounding the den. Making a great

nesting spot and seed rabbits for the nest season. Rabbits and mice are the base of wild food chain. 1. No lead shot lead lowers reproduction proven 2. lime to a ph of 6.5 to 7 healthy soil makes healthy plants makes healthy animals proven 3. a onetime Photostatting of the fields to bind the oxides lead contaminated from prior years of hunting proven 4. plant trees and bushes hinging cut keeping a little bark feeding the tree this has been proven to work very well for cover 5. use chunks of mineral salt from 50 pound cattle blocks placed near there dens making health breeding rabbits as proven in bois D arc for a 2 year.

A rabbit will live in a 5 acre area 95% of their lives. Make thick brushes piles for a den with wheat grass - alfalfa - lespedeza- clover in lose brushes piles surrounding the den. This makes a great nesting spot and seed rabbits for the nest season. Hunting pressure is the number 1 thing controlling rabbit population from a very old MDC report. Rabbits and mice are the base of the food chain.

1. No lead shot lead lowers reproduction proven
2 lime to a ph of 6.5 to 7 healthy soil makes healthy plants makes healthy animals proven
3 a onetime Photostatting of the fields to bind the oxides lead contaminated from prior years of hunting proven
4 plant trees and bushes hinging cut keeping a little bark feeding the tree this has been proven to work very well for cover
5 use chunks of mineral salt from 50 pound cattle blocks placed near there dens making health breeding rabbits as proven in bois D arc for a 2 year taken a 10 year average of 380 to 1100 rabbits copy this and send this to mdc.mo.gov/areaplans BoisDArc befor 1-31-17

I think this area should be opened to horseback riding. At least during non-hunting times.

As this was at least once a listed Quail Emphasis Area, the lack of effort into the habitat is enormously disappointing.

This area needs much more intensive management. While some efforts have been made in clearing of overgrown woody areas, these recently cleared areas are then left to morph into acres and acres of Johnson grass. Other cleared areas not infested with invasive species like Johnson grass and Musk Thistle are rotated on a 3 year basis with no other methods during this time frame. This is far too long. The parts of the area not covered in invasive species are too thick and tall for any type of small game.

Fields are managed well for doves during the first bit of the season, but a distinct lack of bare ground in all but the driest years makes any late season hunting poor. Additionally, these fields are always in the same spot and most of the time on the same type of crop rotation. Crop fields should not only be rotated in crop, but also rotated in areas. This would go a long way in preventing the bad overgrowth seen on the lack of disturbance in other parts of the area.

In addition, this area should also be used to support the Monarchs. Milkweed is in rather short supply due to the poor habitat management.

Ideally, a sufficient grazing system should be set up on parts of this area. A more widespread use

of prescribed fire and invasive species control is far overdue. A sufficient staff for this area would help keep up with the heavy plant growth and ensure that enough suitable small game habitat exist to support a good population of rabbit, quail, dove, and other upland species. This area has enormous potential, but a serious lack of suitable habitat makes this area a drive by on my way to the more western areas of the state.

I think it would be beneficial to open up the area for hunting varmints/pests such as coyotes with centerfire weapons or at least high powered rimfire. The place seems to be crawling with coyotes.

I hope that the new management plan will continue to emphasize quail management. It is hard to find public land with quail hunting opportunity in this part of the country.

I would like to see the area opened to horseback riding.

First, thank you for the opportunity to provide input on development of the Bois d'Arc CA Management Plan. Equestrian trail riders in Greene and Lawrence Counties are greatly underserved with respect to public land riding opportunities. There are over 3,200 horses and mules in Greene County. The only place to ride in Greene County is Wilson's Creek National Park, which charges a significant admission fee. Trails on Busiek State Forest in Christian County are overused, and user conflict is an issue. Pleasant Hope CA in Polk County does not have sufficient miles of trails to provide an attractive one-to-two day experience. To address this lack of opportunity Bois d'Arc CA is at the top of a priority list of Conservation Areas recommended for multi-use trail development in the 2015 Expanding Public Land Multi-Use Trails in Missouri proposal by Show-Me Missouri Back Country Horsemen.

Bois d'Arc CA, at 3,172 acres, has ample area to accommodate those activities currently allowed plus a minimum of 10-12 miles of multi-use (hike, bike, horse) trails. The upland landscape, varied land use and cover, and excellent accessibility via good roads are favorable features. Multi-use trails on Bois d'Arc would offer much needed outdoor recreation to Greene and Lawrence County and the Springfield Metropolitan Area. These trails should provide some relief to the overuse of other trail networks on the area's public lands.

SMMBCH offers our services (availability of volunteers permitting) to help decide on the best location and then clear and mark the trails. We further offer to assist the Area Manager to develop a partnership with local trail users to assist with development and maintenance with the trails and associated infrastructure; a number of riders in the area have already expressed a commitment to be part of this partnership.

Thank you again for the opportunity to offer input.

Would like to have access to a longer rifle range, possibly 300 to 400 yards. To be able to explore getting into that type of competition.

(Hardcopy comment received 1/26/2017): I am a neighbor of the conservation area. Although I am not a hunter, I am pleased with the management - Kevin does a great job. I do host a barn owl

nest box in my barn, although it is not occupied at this time. My primary use of the area is for hiking and geocaching.

My sincere hope is the addition of equestrian trails. I believe in multi-use trails which promote outdoor activities by all age groups and this area with its size and location would be ideal providing a much needed addition to the Greene and Lawrence County conservation areas. Thank you for your consideration

(Hardcopy comment received 1/10/2017): My sisters and I continue to manage our parent's farms. One 160 acre farm is immediately to the west of the Bois 'd' Arc Conservation Area. We put up hay on shares with a neighbor for many years and plan to continue that arrangement indefinitely. Another neighbor whose property abuts ours would like to buy it. One sister who lives out of state is opposed to sale but we are in our 70s! I have started to learn how to dispose of property. I don't believe this farm would be good conservation land, but we may be interested in options that could include work with the Dept of Conservation. WE will be interested in ideas/plans for the area going forward.

Thank you for the opportunity to follow plans/developments.

p.s. We live too far away to take advantage of hunting or shooting opportunities, though members of the family have looked wishfully at the area!

I truly enjoy being a neighbor and sharing a property line with the Bois D'Arc Conservation. Albeit a tranquil area, it is becoming more difficult to keep hunters from trespassing onto my property. Signs, purple paint and a watchful eye helps. But the fence is in poor shape and I can not afford the cost and equipment and materials make the need repairs.

Any assistance for land owners would sure be helpful.

Thank you.

no lead shot please. Lead lowers reproduction.

I would like to see a Quail hunting area with limited pressure on the birds similar to the area in west plains

I would like to see equestrian trails in the Bois d Arc C.A. Greene County is one of the most underserved counties for the number of riders and horses in the county. Please consider developing multiuse trails which would include horses in the area. There are volunteer organizations that could and would assist you in sustainable trail design and trail maintenance. Back Country Horsemen of Missouri could help with this. Many horseback riders are elderly and cannot visit the outdoors with activities like hiking and bicycling but can ride a horse. I would like to see multiuse trails that include horseback riding in this conservation area.

I, along with others, would like to see the area opened to horseback riding. With the exception of the Andy Dalton shooting range and the special event only fishing pond, the area is used

primarily for archery during the hunting seasons and some shotgun seasons. These being from roughly, Sept. thru mid Feb. and the spring turkey season. With the exception of the farm practices the area is mostly unused for six months out of the year.

Most of the sections have rather large pathways mowed into them already and area 5 a designated hiking trail area.(though some of those trails have become overgrown to the point of no use during the summer months.) I believe that with the addition of horseback riding these pathways and trails could be maintained to a more usable condition and enjoyed by a lot more people, hikers and hunters included. There is a population of people that without their horses they would not be able to be in the outdoors such as these at all and here again this area is used very little in the off hunting season months. It is my proposal that this area be opened to horseback riding year round but at the very least, during the off hunting months though I am sure those with bird dogs would also like to be able to work their dogs with the use of a horse to cover more varied terrain.

Parking access is adequate as each area has two to three parking area with a large open area by the maintenance building on fr.94.

Please consider these options for the benefit of all and I would appreciate being notified if there are any meeting in our area regarding the use of the BDCA.

thank you ,

(Hardcopy comment received 1/11/2017): I would like to see the area opened up to horseback riding and to have the hiking trails reestablished and maintained during summer months - I believe horseback riding will help keep these trails open - they tend to overgrow. I have enclosed a list of people who also would like to see the area opened to riding - they may not have received this conservation notice or able to respond (aware) of comp site as I have also done. Please do not disregard their signatures. Marta Norman 4178802741 (This comment also included a petition which included a list of names with address and signature: Ann Gouge, Patricia Devine, B.Kluthe, Candace Davis, Betrice M., L. Savages, Larry R., Lorie Nelson, Kassi B., James Ollis, John Lindsay, Kay B. Kristin Schrieder, Karen Lehmann, David Lehmann, Bruce H., K. Willard, Jan Miller, Dory Hyde, Allegra Hyde, Art & Eleanor Carty, Mike R., Phil Grafft, Elise Peck, Patricia Hudgins, Kimberly Hanson, Jennifer Kahrs, and John Norman)

Bicycles should not be allowed in any natural area. They are inanimate objects and have no rights. There is also no right to mountain bike. That was settled in federal court in 1996: <http://mjvande.info/mtb10.htm> . It's dishonest of mountain bikers to say that they don't have access to trails closed to bikes. They have EXACTLY the same access as everyone else -- ON FOOT! Why isn't that good enough for mountain bikers? They are all capable of walking....

A favorite myth of mountain bikers is that mountain biking is no more harmful to wildlife,

people, and the environment than hiking, and that science supports that view. Of course, it's not true. To settle the matter once and for all, I read all of the research they cited, and wrote a review of the research on mountain biking impacts (see <http://mjvande.info/scb7.htm>). I found that of the seven studies they cited, (1) all were written by mountain bikers, and (2) in every case, the authors misinterpreted their own data, in order to come to the conclusion that they favored. They also studiously avoided mentioning another scientific study (Wisdom et al) which did not favor mountain biking, and came to the opposite conclusions.

Those were all experimental studies. Two other studies (by White et al and by Jeff Marion) used a survey design, which is inherently incapable of answering that question (comparing hiking with mountain biking). I only mention them because mountain bikers often cite them, but scientifically, they are worthless.

Mountain biking accelerates erosion, creates V-shaped ruts, kills small animals and plants on and next to the trail, drives wildlife and other trail users out of the area, and, worst of all, teaches kids that the rough treatment of nature is okay (it's NOT!). What's good about THAT?

To see exactly what harm mountain biking does to the land, watch this 5-minute video: <http://vimeo.com/48784297>.

In addition to all of this, it is extremely dangerous: http://mjvande.info/mtb_dangerous.htm .

For more information: <http://mjvande.info/mtbfaq.htm> .

The common thread among those who want more recreation in our parks is total ignorance about and disinterest in the wildlife whose homes these parks are. Yes, if humans are the only beings that matter, it is simply a conflict among humans (but even then, allowing bikes on trails harms the MAJORITY of park users -- hikers and equestrians -- who can no longer safely and peacefully enjoy their parks).

The parks aren't gymnasiums or racetracks or even human playgrounds. They are WILDLIFE HABITAT, which is precisely why they are attractive to humans. Activities such as mountain biking, that destroy habitat, violate the charter of the parks.

Even kayaking and rafting, which give humans access to the entirety of a water body, prevent the wildlife that live there from making full use of their habitat, and should not be allowed. Of course those who think that only humans matter won't understand what I am talking about -- an indication of the sad state of our culture and educational system.

More areas for horseback riding would be awesome.

(Hardcopy comment received 1/12/2017): I wish the department could manage night observation of parking lots - especially in the summer.

I wish the department would make their land more accessible for bow hunters. The brush makes it difficult for bow hunters.

The area appears to be managed well. The firearm shooting range is great. We really enjoy the free archery range. Its great to see the educational opportunities offered. I hope those all continue however I would not like to see the expansion of the ranges at the expense of hunting areas.

I would like to see more managed hunts on the area for both deer & turkey, possibly even dove. There is a tremendous amount of hunting pressure on the area & I believe the wildlife, hunters & hunting experience would all benefit from managed hunts. The area is large enough to be able to section off an area for managed hunts for any of these species throughout the season. Caney Mountain CA & August A. Busch CA managed hunts for deer & turkey are the examples I think of. Youth hunts would be a great addition. A managed hunt for each week of the spring turkey season would certainly make me feel more safe if I were hunting the area.

Dove hunting on the property can be great but also dangerous. My first (& only) opening day experience on the area taught me this. I will not bring my son to hunt on opening day because of carelessness with gun handling, it only takes 1 mistake for a very unfortunate ending. However I believe the hunting & hunters could benefit from having certain fields or areas setup as managed hunt areas. This could easily be setup the way MDC handles the draw system for waterfowl with the 'poor line' as parties get in line to draw in on the morning of the hunt & the managed-hunt area sectioned off so each party knows where they are allowed to hunt. Maybe the managed hunts are available for only the first week of the season.

As Springfield grows so does the pressure on this area. Managed hunts at Fellows Lake & the Springfield Nature Center are tough to draw into drew a lot of interest. This indicates to me that managed hunts on this area would be certainly draw interest & be well received in the area.

I am an avid trail rider and would like to see designated equestrian trails in this Conservation Area. This general area (Greene County) is underserved in trail miles based on the number of equine in the County. Adding designated trails in this area would assist in avoiding the overuse of trails in this and the surrounding areas. I also utilize the Andy Dalton shooting range and feel equestrian trails could be accommodated with no interference with this recreational opportunity.

We have lived on ten acres surrounded by the Bois D'Arc Conservation Area for over 20 years. We like and appreciate the way the area has been managed in the past, and would like it to continue much the same in the future. We would like MDC to continue the practice of limiting the area to foot-traffic only, except for handicapped access. Please continue to prohibit horse traffic, due to the sensitive karst terrain (sinkholes, caves, etc.).

We like that the fences are being removed and the area 10-20 feet nearest the road is being mowed. It's easier for drivers to see wildlife near the road, and allows hunters to be more aware of road and residence boundaries. The only request that we have is that we be made aware of the timing of prescribed burns.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input and for considering our thoughts. You are good stewards of the land.

I'm sure I'm adding nothing much, but maybe some "public support" will help.

I hunt deer at BdA (as I call it), in section 5. I'd love to see a VERY serious effort at maintaining the glades. I know this is something you want to do. I bet that whole area on the north side of area 5 would be spectacular if it could be restored and regularly maintained. I found some trails this past fall that are badly overgrown, and some of the hiking trails with benches are not very well maintained. I am not sure what to say about the ground under the power lines -- it doesn't seem right. FWIW, it seems to me the management plan that's in place for section 5 is good -- it just needs to be executed.

Section 2 has a lot of forest on it too -- I have not scouted that but want to.

(Hard copy comment received 1/31/2017) I think that the management should pay more attention to the signs. I live across the road from Bois D'Arc Conservation. The signs are NOT in front of the houses. I see men walking along the road and are very close to my house, with guns. It's very unnerving to see this and they have shot in front of my home. I think you would think about the neighbor and their safety. I think the signs should be close to homes. The signs that they put up in front of the gates and parking place, not a mile down the road.